

KY Tech News

the electronic magazine for secondary
career and technical education
Summer 2008

Making the Most of SkillsUSA

How one student has
taken advantage of
his Skills
opportunities

Understanding Program Assessment

Love it or hate it, the
PA process helps
improve programs
and advance
students

Plus:

Good News Flashes
Did You Know?
and
Student Spotlights

Ford /AAA Student Auto
Skills Competition...see
Quick Tech



Contents

April 2008

Volume 5

Quick Tech

Take a brief look at tech ed events happening
all around the state.....Page 3

Making the Most of SkillsUSA

How one student has made the most of his Skills
opportunitiesPage 4

Understanding Program Assessment

Love it or hate it, the PA process helps improve programs and
advance students.....Page 7

For electronic-version users, click on the links below
to read more about KY Tech students, teachers, programs
and administration.

Good News Flashes

<http://www.kytech.ky.gov/marketingclips.htm>

Did You Know?

<http://www.kytech.ky.gov/didyouknow.htm>

Student Spotlights

<http://www.kytech.ky.gov/kytechstudentspotlight.htm>

Quick Tech

A fast look at career and technical education from around the state and around the country

Student Organizations' State Conference Wrap-up

Student organizations brought record numbers of students from around the state to their annual state conferences this year beginning with a snow bound HOSA conference that brought one of its biggest crowds to Louisville March 5-8. Off-site competitions had to endure a last minute change due to the weather but thanks to the efforts of advisors and staff coupled with the patients of the students, the contests went off without too many complications. This year's state SkillsUSA conference saw a record amount of prize and scholarship money offered to the tune of \$1.25 million. State Advisor Steve Phillippi gives the credit to volunteers at the local and regional levels for the reaching the milestone. State SkillsUSA membership has risen nearly 70 percent over the past five years. The conference was held April 1-4. Other state conferences included: FBLA State Leadership Conference- May 6-8 and FFA State Convention June 12-14.

2008 Ford AAA Student Auto Skills Competition

Twenty of the best and brightest automotive technology secondary students made their way to Newport recently to participate in this year's Ford AAA Student Auto Skills Competition. In order to qualify for the hands-on competition, schools had to first take an online exam in February. Over 200 students from 22 schools in Kentucky completed the exam this year. Two students from the top 10 schools were invited to compete in contest. Garrard County ATC students Erik Johnson and Justin Ray, along with their automotive technology instructor Mike Armstrong, placed first in the competition. Johnson and Ray will now move on to the national competition to be held June 24 at Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan. In addition, the two won over \$58,000 in combined scholarships, \$786 in tools from Snap-On and \$500 in gift cards for NAPA tools. Barren County ATC finished in second place and Shelby County ATC finished third. The competition enables many of its participants to embark on promising careers in the automotive repair industry with scholarships provided to the nation's top technical schools. The demand for well-trained technicians is expected to remain high. The U.S. Department of Labor foresees the need for qualified technicians to grow 14 percent through the year 2016, accounting for 110,000 new jobs. Once these students complete their training, they should be qualified to find employment. **Go to page 10 for a photo account of the event.**

Making the Most of SkillsUSA

How one student has made the most of his Skills opportunities

By: Kim Brannock

You might not expect to hear a high school student use phrases such as career path, team management and business etiquette in everyday conversation unless you have spent time with Daniel Moore, Kentucky SkillsUSA vice president.

The senior at Paul Lawrence Dunbar High School and Eastside Technical Center in Lexington has his goals set on a computer science major in college and eventually climbing the management ladder at a company. And he is using technical education and his experience in SkillsUSA as a springboard for those ambitions.

“SkillsUSA really helps with leadership qualities and business etiquette. School gives you the knowledge of how to do things but it doesn’t always teach you how to apply the knowledge, which is what Skills helps you with,” he said.

SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization that provides career and technical education students with opportunities in leadership and skills development.

Moore said he originally got involved in SkillsUSA three years ago at the urging of a teacher. During that time, he has served as the local president at Eastside Technical Center and now vice president on the state level. He also has participated in state and national SkillsUSA competitions. Nearly 5,700 students are members of SkillsUSA Kentucky.

“After a while I grew attached to it (SkillsUSA). I went to Kentucky Leadership Training Institute and it had a good influence on my career path,” Moore said.



“School gives you the knowledge of how to do things but it doesn’t always teach you how to apply the knowledge, which is what Skills helps you with.”

Daniel Moore

Tonya Varnish, Moore's computer programming teacher at Eastside Technical Center, said, "A majority of my students go on to postsecondary education and about 95 percent of them get some form of scholarship based on academics because of (SkillsUSA) competition."

Varnish said that some people have the wrong idea about technical schools and the students who go to them. She said that contrary to what some people might expect, she has students in her classes who are on the honor roll and in advanced placement classes. In fact, students who earn at least a B grade in courses at the technical center are eligible for college credit.

"Society is beginning to see that technical schools are allowing students to do things they love while getting a valuable education. I think that we need to teach kids that work can be fun and they need to find a career they can be happy with and enjoy doing. And technology is a growing field with opportunities," Varnish said.

She said the students work on programming and coding on their own and then come in and tell her about the stage of development that they're working on at home.

"I've been teaching for 20 years and this is the most rewarding experience I've ever had because of the eagerness of the kids to learn. When I came here, I was amazed at the closeness and family environment. The kids are eager to do the work and want to learn. I would recommend for anybody to come by our classes and see what we are doing," Varnish said.

She added that Moore has taken advantage of every opportunity the technical center has offered such as SkillsUSA competitions, leadership roles, classes, representing the school and

visiting businesses and colleges. She said he is currently training two other students for state competition.

Varnish said competition events have given him the opportunity to meet people he would have never met, a chance to qualify for scholarships, and a sense of responsibility and pride. It also has taught him how to dress for business and how to handle himself in professional situations.

Moore said, "SkillsUSA competition is a good hands-on experience. It allows you to interact with heads of corporations and it helps you get your foot in the door."

Steve Phillippi, SkillsUSA Kentucky director, said, "Over the years, I've seen students involved in SkillsUSA achieve high levels of learning and the ability to earn more in a very competitive job market. Daniel is an excellent example of the type of students that are exploring their talents and abilities through SkillsUSA."

Moore has won two first place awards in state SkillsUSA competition in the 3-D Visualization and Animation event and has competed in the event on the national level. As an example of the type of skills challenge involved in the contests, Moore said during one competition he and a partner had to recreate a train from a blueprint in 3-D in a seven-hour period.

Competition gives students an avenue to win scholarship money for postsecondary education. Approximately, 900 students will be involved in the state SkillsUSA conference that will be held in Louisville in April. Students can win about \$1 million in scholarships, and additional \$250,000 in prizes and services from business and industry during the event, said Phillippi. "This conference is a showcase for the state's best career and technical students to demonstrate their excellence in both skills and leadership. State competition encompasses 75 occupational and leadership skill events

including such diverse events as debate, extemporaneous speaking, cabinetmaking, robotics and desktop publishing. I wish everyone could see the enthusiasm and self-confidence that comes from being involved in SkillsUSA competitions,” said Phillippi.

“When I’m competing, it gives me a better grasp of where I am with other people in my age group and where I need to be. It gives me a grasp of where I need to be and encourages me to work harder on it,” Moore said.

Varnish said, “Daniel can take on any competition. He’s made a lot of connections in the IT world through Skills. He wears 10 hats. He’s learned how to balance time and responsibility and that’s what you do in the work world.”

“One of the biggest things I can teach them is responsibility. They can have all of the knowledge in the world but if they’re not responsible, they won’t be successful,” Varnish said.

Moore has been accepted to several state universities in Kentucky and has won scholarships during competitions but he has not decided on where he will go in the fall. He is interested in continuing his involvement in SkillsUSA on the college level. He also has a job lined up that came through his involvement in SkillsUSA and Eastside Technical Center. Professionally, Moore wants to pursue a career in computer engineering or mechanical engineering and focus on problem solving and developing the new components for computers.



Eastside Technology Center Student Daniel Moore works on a project during one of his Information Technology classes.

UNDERSTANDING PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Love it or hate it, the PA process helps improve programs and advance students

By: Tim Thornberry

The words “program assessment” don’t appear in the dictionary together but defined separately – and to paraphrase Merriam-Webster – they mean “a way to determine the importance, size, or value of a plan or system under which action may be taken toward a goal.”

At the very core of program assessment in the world of technical education is the expectation of continuous improvement of career and technical education (CTE) programs with the continuous improvement of its students.

With this in mind, it fair to say that the whole program assessment process has been loved by some and loathed by others and perhaps with good reason for both. Albeit a long, time consuming process, program assessment provides an avenue for teachers to take charge of their programs and see them through to new levels with each assessment.

Myra Wilson, program assessment branch supervisor for the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE), said Kentucky career-and-technical educators need to remember that quality CTE programs provide the foundation for increased student achievement.

“Program assessment sets standards to provide statewide consistency of career and technical programs. As a result, CTE students benefit in academic and technical achievement,” Wilson said. “Data collected from program assessment visits show improvement in both locally and state-operated schools.



OCTE's Wayne King looks over a check list during a recent PA visit.

“Examples of improvements include increased participation in student organizations and work-based learning, safer classrooms and labs, inclusion of academic content in instruction, more participation by advisory committee members, improved planning, and increased use of recommended curriculum and identification of courses that link to dual credit,” she added.

She offers words of encouragement to teachers. “We know program assessment is a difficult issue for some, and we want teachers and administrators to know we are here to assist in any way. Doing well with assessment is best accomplished when it becomes a continuous process and not something done a few days before a visit,” said Wilson.

Most CTE educators would undoubtedly agree that some sort of PA is a necessity but, as with all teachers, there is so much to accomplish by the end of the day, how can they get a grip on something that seems so vast?

The answer may lie in the words “seems so vast.” To borrow an old cliché, “how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time!”

The process while mind boggling to many can certainly be conquered but that has to be a continuous process, one that is open to suggestions according to John Marks, executive director of the Office of Career and Technical Education (OCTE.)

“The program assessment process will continue. However, we are open to suggestions from teachers and administrators on how it may be improved. We are willing to listen and change the process, if necessary, without compromising the good of our students,” said Marks.

Linda Floyd, an area supervisor for OCTE, has seen both sides of program assessment. She is a former principal at an area technology center and now serves in an administrative capacity for several schools.

“Any great system utilizes a quality assessment tool and standardization that can present challenges when you have so many tech centers spread out across the state. The program assessment process, however, allows us 17 standards whereby all programs can be assessed using the same criteria. I believe everyone can benefit from this process, especially those schools where everyone is involved, including the principal, secretary, maintenance personnel and teachers,” she said.



“The program assessment process will continue. However, we are open to suggestions from teachers and administrators on how it may be improved. We are willing to listen and change the process, if necessary, without compromising the good of our students.”

OCTE Director John Marks

A team effort

James Hardin, principal at Southside Technical Center in Lexington, said, "When this assessment process is used in the manner for which it was intended, it serves as a valuable tool for program improvement and, consequently, school-wide improvement. Ultimately, the students are the benefactors of this assessment. It provides teachers and the school administration with evidence that promotes continuous improvement in curriculum and delivery methods alongside updated facilities plans for the school."

Martha Williams, a health sciences teacher at Martin County Area Technology Center, has been through the procedure and scored the highest marks possible. Still, she said that while valuable, the process could use some modifications.

Jim Stone of the National Center for Research in Career and Technical Education recently discussed Kentucky's program assessment process with a group of CTE teachers and principals recommending a series of face-to-face meetings across the state with teachers and principals to get a better insight as to what we can do to improve the process, the buy-in, as well as the quality of program assessment in Kentucky.

In April and May, seven Focus Group Meetings were held across the state to discuss revisions to the program assessment process and document for career and technical education programs. The principal and a teacher from every state-operated area technology center and from all career and technical education centers in the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) were invited to participate.

"Recommendations based upon the outcome of the meetings among Dr. Stone, teacher and principals in February were presented to participants of the Focus Groups," said Wilson

Marks and Debbie Anderson, director of KDE's Division of Career and Technical Education reviewed the recommendations from the participants and will present their recommendations to the Program Assessment Revision Committee on June 19 for consideration. The committee will then present their final recommendations to Marks and Anderson for final approval. The revision process should be finalized and available for view by August 1, 2008.

Wilson suggests six steps to help boost program assessment scores and make the process more manageable by incorporating the two main concepts for program assessment success: knowledge of the process and organization. Those steps include: Prepare "totes" at the beginning of the school year with hanging folders for each standard and individual, labeled folders for subsections of each standard; use a monitoring schedule to break the process into small pieces and start the process early; use the program assessment checklist to record each item placed in a tote to have a quick snapshot of needed documentation; refer to the Web site at <http://kytech.ky.gov/programassessment.htm>; become familiar with the program assessment document and refer to it often; and read the instructions in the document and on the Web site and refer to them often.

If you have questions or concerns about program assessment, email Myra Wilson at MyraH.Wilson.ky.gov.

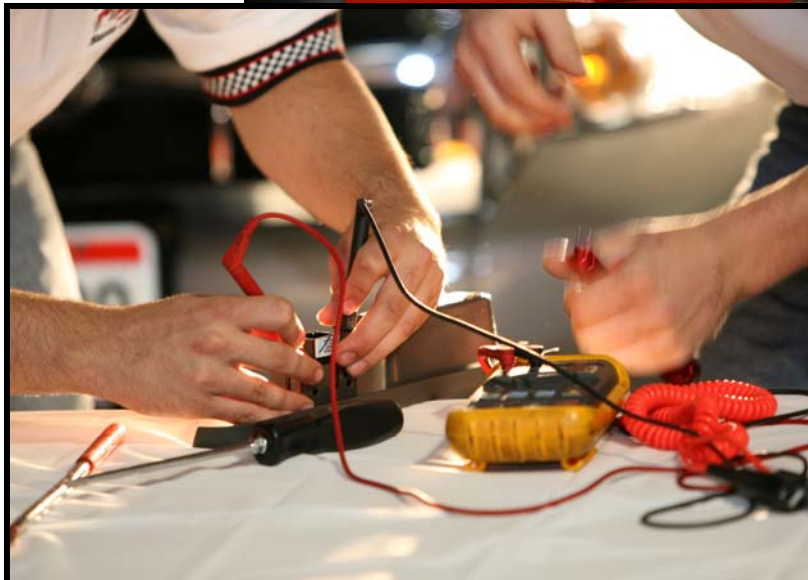
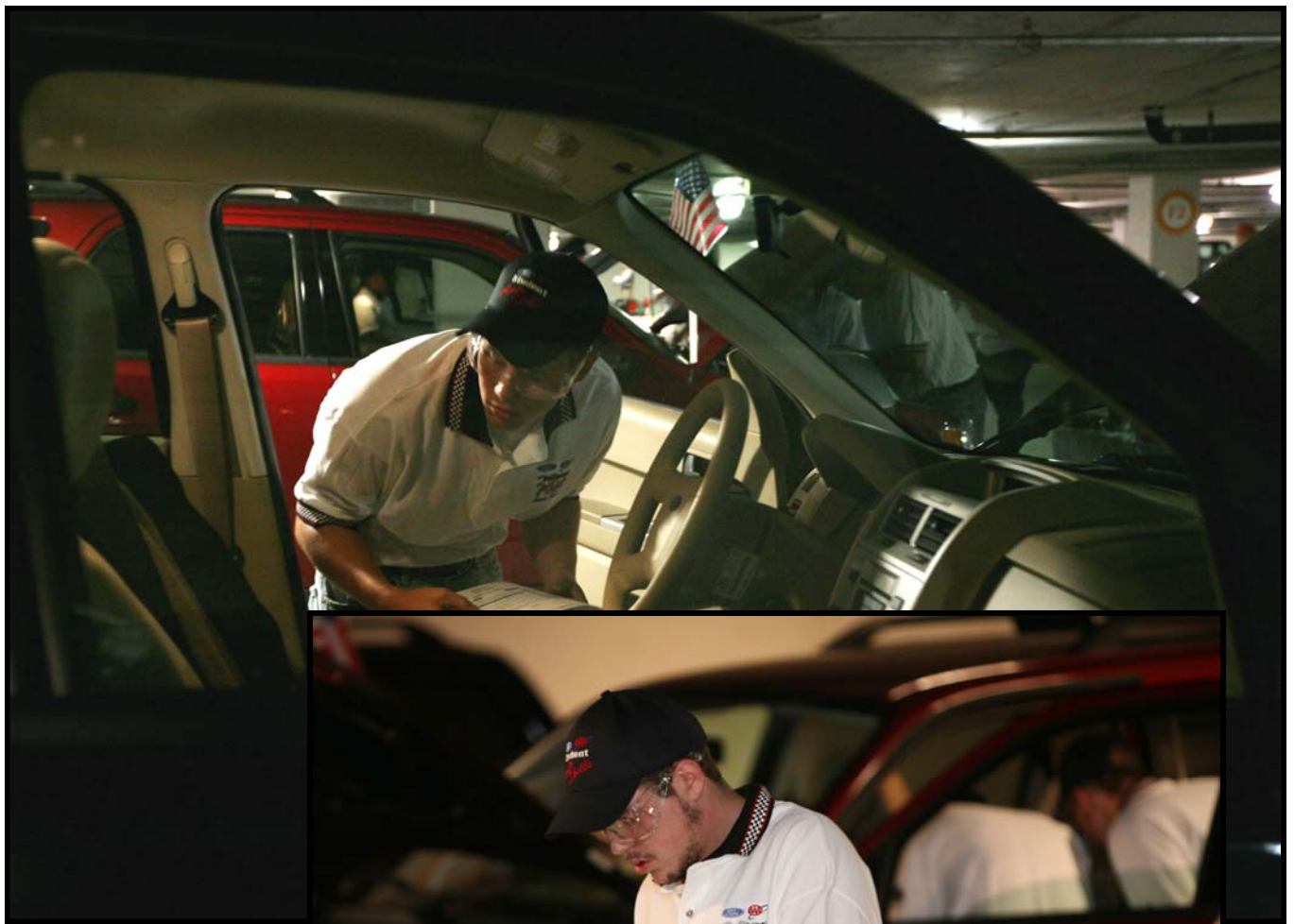
The 2008 Ford AAA Student Auto Skills Competition in Photos

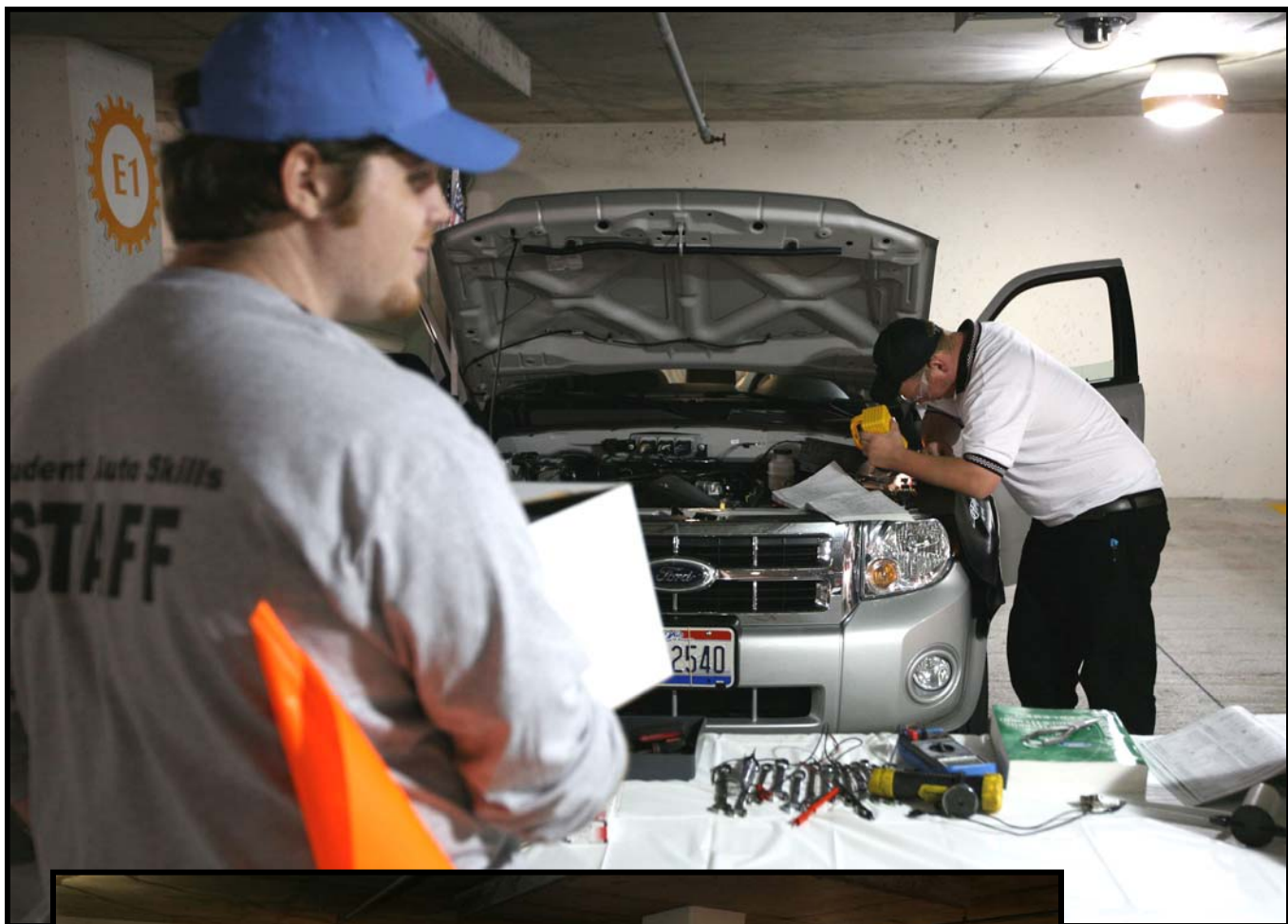


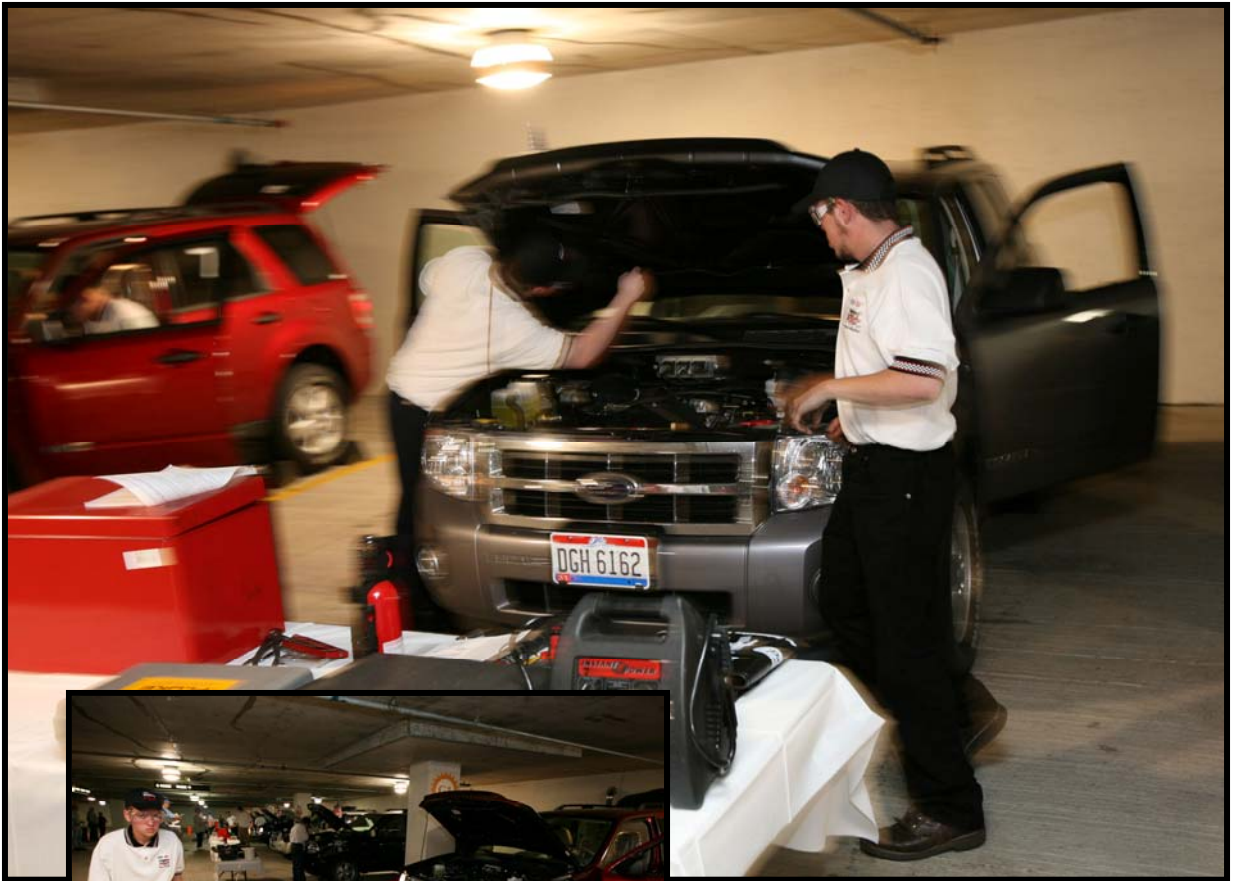
Ford/AAA Student Auto Skills Competition first place winners Erik Johnson, left and Justin Ray, right, pictured along with their automotive technology instructor Mike Armstrong of Garrard County ATC.

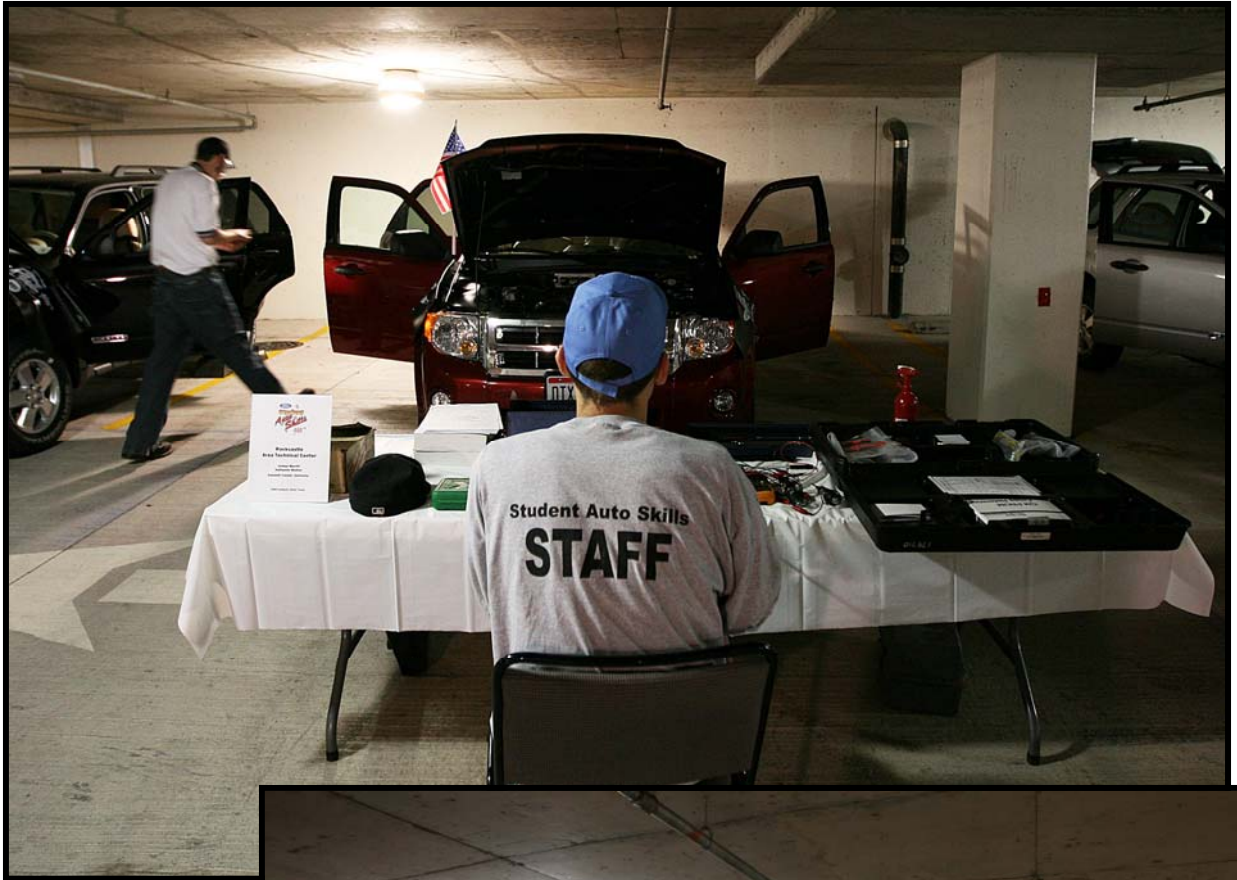












For a slide show of the event go to
http://www.kytech.ky.gov/2008_Ford_AAA_PhotoStory3_1.wmv

KY Tech News is produced by the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet in conjunction with the Department for Workforce Investment's Office of Career and Technical Education.

OCTE administers 55 area technology centers, which are secondary schools that offer students hands-on training in business, communications, construction, manufacturing, transportation and information technology fields and health and human services.

The Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet coordinates learning programs from P-16 and manages and supports training and employment functions in the Department for Workforce Investment.

For more information about our programs, visit www.educationcabinet.ky.gov or www.workforce.ky.gov, or call 502-564-1270.

